Many debates in contemporary political philosophy focus on the question of how social, economic and political institutions should be set up in order to be just. This course examines this question via four broad topics.

The first topic, global political issues, considers what duties we have towards those who live in countries other than our own. Do we have the right to restrict immigration? Do we have duties to redistribute wealth from the richest to the poorest countries? Is the nation a community with normative significance, or should questions of justice apply to humanity as whole? What political arrangements are normatively required to protect the global environment?

The second topic, community and culture, examines controversies that arise when thinking about justice in the context of either a community with shared values, or diverse multicultural societies. Should the state be neutral between conceptions of the good, or should it reflect shared values of the community? What does justice require if a political community lacks shared values? Can a liberal state legitimately influence or prohibit cultural practices? What if those practices are illiberal?

The third topic, feminism, encompasses a diverse set of theories, all united by the claim that our current society is unjust since there are profound inequalities between women and men. Why are women poorer than men, despite equal pay and anti-discrimination legislation? Are women worse off because they take more responsibility for domestic and caring work? Does the significance of care require us to change the way we think about justice or even the way we do political philosophy? What is the political and philosophical significance of pornography and rape? How can they best be conceptualised, and what is the correct normative response to them? What it means to say that women and men are different from each other? How do these differences arise, and what is their political and philosophical significance? How does gender intersect with other social cleavages such as race, class and disability? Does feminism require a unified category of woman, and is such a category possible?

The fourth broad topic of the course is radical political theory. What is Marx’s concept of alienation, and what is the normative significance of alienated labour? What is the Marxist concept of ideology, and what does it mean to say that ideas are connected with the ruling class? How should we best understand the related concept of power — is it a matter of who is able to win in overt competition, or of subtle, ever-present influence, or something in between? Next, debates over the method of political philosophy, including the debates between realists and moralists, and between proponents of ideal and non-ideal theory. Finally, what are the limits of markets? Are there things that should not be bought and sold?

Prerequisites

None

Objectives

Students taking this paper will be expected to:

1. Acquire a detailed knowledge of some of the concepts, positions and arguments in the central literature on the topics of the course.
2. Acquire a sense of how the positions on different topics relate to each other.
3. Engage closely and critically with some of the ideas studied.
4. Develop their ability to think independently about some of the ideas studied.
5. Construct their own arguments, responding to but not merely reproducing the arguments of others.

Preliminary Reading

The following text books are listed in order from most to least introductory.

GLOBAL POLITICAL ISSUES

Immigration

Do states have the right to control immigration, or do they have a duty to open their borders?

*CARENS, Joseph, The Ethics of Immigration (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Also available online at: https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780199933846

[Especially chs. 1, 11 & 12]


International Justice

This section considers the tragedy and injustice of global poverty. Do rich countries and their citizens have a duty to help the global poor? If so, is this a duty of charity or of justice? And how extensive is that duty? Should we be aiming for an equal distribution of the world’s resources, or just to alleviate poverty and protect human rights?


SINGER, Peter, 'Global Justice Based on Reciprocity', Journal of Political Philosophy, 3, no. 3 (2005): 317-34.


Rawls's Law of Peoples: A Realistic Utopia

Justice Beyond Borders

The Law of Peoples

Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

This section considers whether the nation is an ethical community. Is partiality towards co-nationals permitted or even required by justice? Alternatively, cosmopolitanism is the
view that justice requires that people are treated equally regardless of their nationality and citizenship.


ONEILL, Onora, Bounds of Justice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), ch. 9 'Identities, Boundaries and States'. Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511605734.


Global Environment

Climate change is a global problem requiring a global solution. This section considers who has the duty to do what to alleviate the effects of climate change and prevent environmental catastrophe.


SINGER, Peter, Practical Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chs. 9 & 10.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Political Liberalism

This section considers John Rawls’s theory of political liberalism, according to which the state should be neutral between conceptions of the good. On this approach, liberalism applies to political questions only and can be accepted by people with a wide variety of views of the good life. Students should start by reading Rawls, using Freeman or a textbook listed above if necessary, before moving on to the other philosophers in this section.


This section considers those thinkers who criticised Rawls and other liberals for focusing too heavily on the isolated individual, ignoring the political significance of community.


*SANDEL, Michael, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), ch. 1. Also available on Moodle.


WALDRON, Jeremy, Liberal Rights (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ch. 15 'When Justice Replaces Affection: The Need for Rights'. Also available on Moodle.


**Communitarianism**

Can liberalism deal with cultural diversity? Does justice require special measures to protect minority cultures, such as legal exemptions or financial subsidy?

Also see section: FEMINISM: Gender and Difference/Intersectionality, below.

*BARRY, Brian, Culture and Difference/Intersectionality, below.


*FRASER, Nancy, Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the Post-Socialist Condition (London: Routledge, 1997), ch. 1 'From redistribution to recognition? Dilemmas of justice in a "postsocialist" age.' Also available on Moodle.


*SAUL, Jennifer, Feminism: Issues and Arguments (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), ch. 9 'Feminism and respect for cultures'.

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**FEMINISM**

**Economic Justice and Gender**

This section considers how gender inequality interacts with economic inequality, including through gendered practices of care, work, and family.


*NUSSBAUM, Martha, Sex and Social Justice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), ch. 2 'The feminist critique of liberalism'. Also available online at: http://lib.mylibrary.com/?id=45331.


**Gender and Difference/Intersectionality**

This section considers two related issues. First, it considers whether there are differences between women, such as differences of race and class that undermine theories of 'women' taken as a whole. Intersectional feminism centres this idea. Theorists to start with on this question are Hooks, Crenshaw, Spelman, Haslanger. Second, the section considers whether cultural differences and cultural practices undermine feminism, or vice versa. On this question, start with Okin, Nussbaum, Young, Fraser.


**Pornography**

This section considers pornography as a feminist issue. Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon are the leading radical feminist critics of pornography. Rae Langton offers a critique based on speech act theory and silencing. Ronald Dworkin is sceptical.


Rape

This section considers the philosophical and political aspects of rape, including what counts as rape and why the existence of rape is relevant to feminism and to political philosophy in general.


Masculinity and Femininity

This section considers whether masculinity and femininity should be considered as natural or constructed, and why that matters to feminism. It also considers the political significance of embodiment and appearance.


*BUTLER, Judith, Gender Trouble (London: Routledge, 1999), ch. 1 ‘Subjects of sex/gender/desire’. Also available online at: http://lib.myilibrary.com/?ID=31683.


CHAMBERS, Clare, Sex, Culture, and Justice: the Limits of Choice (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), Part 1 ‘Theories of social construction’.

CONNELL, Raewyn W., Masculinities (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), ch. 3 ‘The social organization of masculinity’.


WITTIG, Monique, The Straight Mind and Other Essays (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1982).

RADICAL POLITICAL THEORY

Marxism: Ideology

This section considers the Marxist concept of ideology through the work of Marx, his followers, and his critics. Start with the primary texts.


**Marxism: Alienation**

This section considers the Marxist concept of alienation. What is the relationship between the worker and her work under capitalism? Start with the primary texts.


*LUKES, Steven, 'Alienation and Anomie', in his *Essays in Social Theory* (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1994), pp. 74-95. Also available on Moodle.


**Power**

This section considers the various ways of understanding the essentially political concept of power, ranging from simple measures of political influence and control in the work of Robert Dahl, to the pervasive and ubiquitous power theorised by Michel Foucault. It includes feminist and radical conceptions of power.


Realism vs. Moralism/Ideal and Non-Ideal Theory

Should political philosophy be a theory of ideal worlds and abstract, universal concepts of justice? Or should it take into account real-world problems of non-compliance, power, and conflict? Should political philosophy focus on the philosophy or the politics?


Swift, Adam, and Stuart White, 'Political Theory, Social Science, and Real Politics', in D. Leopold and M. Stears, eds., Political Theory: Methods and Approaches (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 49-69. Also available online at: https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780191552069


The Limits of Markets

This section considers whether there are some things that should not be bought and sold, and whether markets corrupt or liberate.


Jeffreys, Sheila, The Idea of Prostitution (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1997), ch. 6 'Just a job like any other? Prostitution as "work"'.


Mackinnon, Catharine, Trafficking, Prostitution and Inequality. Podcast of lecture available at: http://upload.sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1102267

Power, Nina, One-Dimensional Woman (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009), sect. 1.1 'You're like an advert for yourself'.
